

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-07 /020 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/PP: WZIMMERMANN

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R 121725Z MAR 76

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TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 060633

E.O. 11652;

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY THEN AND NOW  
SUMMARY. WE PROPOSE TO SEND THE ATTACHED ANALYSIS OF THE  
PCE TO ALL EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS, AND WOULD FIRST  
APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE ON THE DRAFT. END  
SUMMARY.

1. THE FOLLOWING POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PCE, FOR YOUR  
BACKGROUND USE, IS IN RESPONSE TO SEVERAL REQUESTS MADE DUR-  
ING THE RECENT DCM/POLITICAL COUNSELORS MEETING IN BRUSSELS.  
ITS BASIC THESIS IS THAT, WHILE THE PCE IS A LEADING DISSI-  
DENT AGAINST SOVIET POSITIONS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COM-  
MUNIST MOVEMENT, IN THE SPANISH CONTEXT IT RETAINS, FOR  
HISTORICAL REASONS, SOMETHING OF A STALINIST IMAGE.

2. IN THE YEARS PRECEDING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR THE NON-  
COMMUNIST LEFT WAS VERY POWERFUL IN SPAIN. THE TWO STRONG-  
EST PARTIES -- THE SOCIALISTS, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE  
POLITICAL PROCESS DURING THE REPUBLIC, AND THE ANARCHISTS,  
WHO CHOSE NOT TO -- EACH CONTROLLED A LARGE TRADE UNION.  
THE COMMUNISTS WERE SO WEAK THAT PRIMO DE RIVERA, THE  
DICTATOR DURING THE 20'S, DID NOT EVEN BOTHER TO SUPPRESS  
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,S-A RESULT OF THE POPULAR FRONT VICTORY IN THE ELEN 1929.  
OF 1936, THE COMMUNISTS GOT ONLY 16 SEATS IN THE CORTES  
(AS COMPAREI TO 89 FOR THE SOCIALISTS). IT WAS DURING THE

CIVIL WAR THAT THE COMMUNISTS MADE THEIR METEORIC RISE. THEY GAINED IN INFLUENCE AGAINST THEIR COALITION PARTNER, THE SOCIALISTS, AND BY THE END OF THE LOSING WAR EFFORT THEY CONTROLLED THE DEFENSE MINISTRY -- AND VIRTUALLY ALL THE ARMED FORCES ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE -- AND WERE CLOSE TO THE POINT AT WHICH THEY COULD HAVE TAKEN OVER THE GOVERNMENT, OR AT LEAST WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT.

3. HOW DID THEY DO IT? MOST HISTORIANS ADDUCE THREE REASONS. FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT, THEY CONTROLLED THE SUPPLY OF SOVIET ARMS WHICH WAS ESSENTIAL TO THE REPUBLICAN WAR EFFORT. SECOND, THEY ESPOUSED A FAIRLY MODERATE SOCIAL POLICY, FAR TO THE RIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, OF THE ANARCHISTS, WHO WERE TRYING TO MAKE A SOCIAL REVOLUTION WHILE FIGHTING FRANCO. AND THIRD, THEY HAD BETTER DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZING CAPACITY THAN THE OTHER PARTIES. ANOTHER REASON -- STILL REMEMBERED IN SPAIN -- IS THEIR RUTHLESS EFFORT TO TRY TO EXTERMINATE OR NEUTRALIZE THEIR RIVALS IN THE LEFT, THE ANARCHISTS AND THE SOCIALISTS. THEIR AIM WAS TO ESTABLISH THEIR HEGEMONY, EVEN AT THE COST OF THE WAR EFFORT. IN EFFECT THEIR ACTIVITIES WERE AN EXTENSION TO SPAIN OF STALIN'S PURGES WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

4. THE PCE'S ACTIVITIES AS AN OPPORTUNISTIC, SOVIET-CONTROLLED, AND FOREIGN-ORIENTED PARTY SEVERELY CRIPPLED THE WAR EFFORT. JOAQUIN MAURIN, WHO WITH ANDRES NIN BROKE WITH THE PCE TO FORM A SPLINTER PARTY AND WHO SURVIVED THE CIVIL WAR BECAUSE, UNLIKE NIN, HE WAS CAPTURED BY FRANCO RATHER THAN BY THE COMMUNISTS, HAS WRITTEN: "FROM THE MOMENT IN WHICH THE ALTERNATIVE WAS POSED, BEGINNING IN JUNE 1937, BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AT THE ORDERS OF MOSCOW, OR THE OPPOSING MILITARY REGIME, REACTIONARY BUT SPANISH, THE CONCLUSION OF THE CIVIL WAR WAS PREDETERMINED."

5. THE PCE IS THUS FORCED TO BRING TO THE CURRENT SPANISH POLITICAL SITUATION SOME AWKWARD HISTORICAL BAGGAGE. IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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DEED, IT MAY APPEAR AS THE ENEMY NOT ONLY OF THE RIGHT, AGAINST WHICH IT FOUGHT, BUT ALSO OF THE LEFT, WHICH IT SOUGHT TO DESTROY. ITS IMAGE IS NOT HELPED BY THE FACT THAT ITS SECRETARY GENERAL SANTIAGO CARRILLO ALLEGEDLY HELPED TO FINGER SPANISH LEFTISTS FOR EXECUTION DURING THE CIVIL WAR. MOREOVER, THE PARTY WHICH NOW APPEARS TO BE THE PCE'S MAJOR RIVAL ON THE LEFT IN POST-FRANCO SPAIN -- THE PSOE -- IS THE SAME SOCIALIST PARTY AGAINST WHICH THE PCE SUCCESSFULLY JOCKEYED FOR POSITION DURING THE CIVIL WAR. WHILE THE PSOE'S CURRENT LEADERSHIP COMES FROM A POST-CIVIL WAR GENERATION, THE PARTY'S HISTORICAL BITTERNESS ABOUT

ITS POPULAR FRONT EXPERIENCES PRESUMABLY LINGERS ON.

6. CARRILLO BEGAN TO CHANGE THE PCE'S TUNE CONSIDERABLY IN THE MID-1950'S IN A DRIVE TO SHOW INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW, TO ADAPT TO SPANISH CONDITIONS, AND POSSIBLY TO STEAL A MARCH ON HIS RIVALS IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. THE PCE HAS BECOME A VOCAL SUPPORTER OF POLITICAL PLURALISM AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, THOUGH SOME COMMITMENTS ARE MORE HEDGED THAN THOSE OF THE PCI, THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. IT HAS DISTANCED ITSELF FROM MOSCOW ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS: IT WAS A STRONG CRITIC OF THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, IT HAS CHALLENGED THE SOVIET POSITION ON CHINA, IT HAS TAKEN A "NATIONAL" POSITION ON SOVIET EFFORTS TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENT, AND IT IS CURRENTLY LINED UP AGAINST SOVIET EFFORTS TO STAGE-MANAGE THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE. RECENTLY CARRILLO SUGGESTED THAT A BLOC OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS WOULD HAVE A POLITICAL STRUCTURE DIFFERENT FROM THE EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS AND THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT LIKE IT, A STATEMENT FROM WHICH EVEN THE PCI FELT COMPELLED TO RECOIL. A FEW YEARS AGO THE SOVIETS EVEN TRIED TO PUT CARRILLO DOWN BY CREATING A MOSCOW-BASED RIVAL PCE, HEADED BY A CIVIL WAR GENERAL, BUT THEY ARE NOW SOFT-PEDALLING THE EFFORT.

7. IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER CARRILLO'S CAREFULLY CULTIVATED REPUTATION AS A MAVERICK HAS HELPED HIM MUCH IN TODAY'S SPAIN. THE PCE'S EFFORTS TO REVIVE A POPULAR FRONT HAVE NOT BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL, SO FAR AT LEAST. THE PSOE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THOUGH UNDER PRESSURE, HAS SO FAR STAYED OUT OF THE PCE-SPONSORED JUNTA DEMOCRATICA, REMAINING INSTEAD WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN A COMPETING COALITION. (THE PSOE HAS, HOWEVER, AGREED TO SPECIFIC MANIFESTOS ISSUED JOINTLY BY BOTH COALITIONS.) MOREOVER, MOST OBSERVERS IN SPAIN SEEM TO FEEL THAT THE PCE, IF ALLOWED TO COMPETE IN A FREE ELECTION, WOULD NOT GET MORE THAN ABOUT 15 PERCENT OF THE VOTE.

8. THE PCE HAS, HOWEVER, MADE SIGNIFICANT INROADS IN THE ILLEGAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN SPAIN. COMMUNISTS ARE THE MAJOR FORCE BEHIND MOST OF THE WORKERS' COMMISSIONS, WHICH HAVE SHOWN STRENGTH IN A NUMBER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES. COMMUNIST SUCCESS APPEARS TO BE DUE TO THE CELL-LIKE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSIONS (WHICH, BEING A TRADITIONAL COMMUNIST PATTERN OF ORGANIZATION, MAXIMIZES THE PCE'S ORGANIZATIONAL TALENTS); TO THE PCE'S CONCENTRATION ON BREAD-AND-BUTTER ECONOMIC ISSUES RATHER THAN POLITICAL QUESTIONS; AND TO THE FACT THAT THE PSOE-AFFILIATED UGT -- THE LEADING SPANISH UNION BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR -- HAS

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DELIBERATELY WORKED OUTSIDE THE WORKERS' COMMISSIONS. IF THE NEW GOVERNMENT LEGALIZED A FREE TRADE UNION SYSTEM, THE EFFECT OF THESE PCE ASSETS WOULD PROBABLY BE DIMINISHED.

9. THE PCE IS OFTEN COMPARED TO THE PCI, WITH WHICH IT IS ALLIED IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOVIET HEGEMONY. THE TWO PARTIES ARE IN FACT DIFFERENT IN IMPORTANT WAYS:

A. THE PCE, BECAUSE OF ITS ROLE AS A SOVIET INSTRUMENT IN THE CIVIL WAR, HAS A LEGACY OF DOMESTIC ENEMIES ON THE LEFT AS WELL AS THE RIGHT. UNLIKE THE PCE, THE PCI WAS AN ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE FORCE AND EMERGED FROM THE UNDERGROUND AS A MAJOR ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTY LEGITIMIZED BY ITS RESISTANCE ROLE. AFTER THE WAR, THE PCI HAD NO CHOICE, UNLESS IT WANTED TO BE A SMALL STALINIST PARTY, BUT TO ADAPT ITSELF TO ITALIAN CONDITIONS. IT THEREFORE PROCLAIMED AN ITALIAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM AND ACCEPTED WORKING INSIDE THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AS THE BEST MEANS OF ACHIEVING POWER. CONFIDENTIAL

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THUS, WHILE THE PCI'S BEHAVIOR DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES OF THE DEMOCRATIC GAME BUT RATHER THE PRESSURES EXERTED ON IT BY THE FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE PERMITTED IT TO PROJECT A MORE POSITIVE IMAGE DOMESTICALLY THAN THE PCE.

B. THE PCI HAS A PROVEN ELECTORAL BASE IN ITALY, HAVING WON AT LEAST A FIFTH OF THE VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION SINCE 1953. WHILE THERE WERE NO FREE ELECTIONS IN SPAIN UNDER FRANCO, THERE IS NO PERSUASIVE INDICATION THAT THE PCE HAS EVER HAD THAT KIND OF VOTE-GETTING ABILITY.

C. THE STRENGTH OF THE NON-COMMUNIST ITALIAN FORCES AND ITALY'S CHOICE OF ALLIANCE WITH THE WEST PLACED CONSTRAINTS ON ANY PCI NON-DEMOCRATIC LENINIST TENDENCIES. WHETHER ITS SUPPORT OF 11 MILLION VOTERS WOULD CONSTITUTE AT LEAST SOME MORTGAGE ON ITS PROFESSED COMMITMENT TO PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY IS A MOOT QUESTION, ANSWERABLE ONLY IF IT WERE TO GAIN POWER AND BE FREED OF ITS PRESENT CONSTRAINTS. BUT THE PCE -- THROUGH MOST OF ITS HISTORY A CADRE AND CLANDESTINE PARTY -- HAS NOT HAD SUCH AN EXPOSURE TO DEMOCRATIC FORMS AT ALL, AT LEAST NOT SINCE THE 1930'S WHEN IT ABUSED THEM. ITS STATEMENTS ON DEMOCRACY ARE NOT ANCHORED IN THE SUPPORT OF ANY POPULAR FOLLOWING, NOR PROBABLY ARE THEY SHARED BY ALL PCE CADRES, AS CARRILLO'S OCCASIONAL DEFENSIVE STATEMENTS ATTEST.

10. THE ISSUE OF THE PCE'S ROLE IN THE SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM IS NOT AT THIS WRITING A CURRENT ONE, SINCE THE PCE IS STILL AN ILLEGAL PARTY IN SPAIN. THE PSOE, USING

ARGUMENTS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF MARIO SOARES ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY, ADVOCATES PCE LEGALIZATION, BOTH OUT OF PRINCIPLE AND IN ORDER TO DENY THE PCE A MARTYR IMAGE. (HOWEVER, THE PSOE HAS NOT CONDITIONED ITS OWN PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, WHICH THE GOS ADVOCATES, ON LEGALIZATION OF THE PCE). THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO LEGALIZE THE PCE, PARTLY OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INNATE CONSERVATISM AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE DANGER OF A STRONG REACTION FROM THE RIGHT (INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR

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THE MILITARY). WE SHARE THE GOS SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE PCE AS A TRUSTWORTHY PARTICIPANT AND AGREE THAT LEGALIZATION OF THE PCE AT THIS TIME WOULD BE RISKY. GIVEN THE INHERENT VOLATILITY OF THE POST-FRANCO SPANISH SCENE, THE ISSUE MAY NOT BE DORMANT FOR LONG. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 15 SEP 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REPORTS, COMMUNISTS, POLITICAL PARTIES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 MAR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE060633  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** EUR/PP: WZIMMERMANN  
**Enclosure:** JANOTTA/CHICHESTER PER TELCON  
**Executive Order:** 11652; SUBJECT= THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY THEN AND NOW  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** D760095-0678  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t197603116/baaaeoio.tel  
**Line Count:** 238  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 31 MAR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <01 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** data\_error  
**TAGS:** PINT, SP, PCE  
**To:** MADRID  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006